

cut. It is based on the assumption that the economy is fixed. They are wrong because they don't account for the extra revenue that tax reform will generate by creating more taxpayers and higher paychecks.

As was noted by an analysis by the American Enterprise Institute and U.S. Policy Metrics: "If the economy grows an average of 2.6 percent, the Republican tax reform bill would not raise the deficit. If the economy grows faster than 2.6 percent, the deficit would actually fall."

It should be noted that in the last two consecutive quarters, the U.S. economy has grown at an annual rate of 3 percent or more. That is, in part, due to the increased confidence by businesses, consumers, investors, and entrepreneurs that we will indeed make good on our promise to complete tax reform this year.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues concerned about the deficit and the debt to join me in supporting the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act when this bill returns to the House floor so that we can ignite economic growth, create new jobs, and give American workers the pay increase that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, it is their money. Let's give it back to them.

RECOGNIZING STEVE HOGG

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, December is a special month. We celebrate the birth of Christ, but we are also celebrating a church in Rock Hill, South Carolina, that has done amazing things. It is a 30-year celebration for the First Baptist Church in Rock Hill, South Carolina. It is also celebrating a pastor that has stood the test of time. He has done amazing things at this church.

Let me tell you what has occurred over the past 30 years.

The church relocated in April 2004 to an 84,000-square-foot facility. It was 52 acres of land. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, when the First Baptist Church made that move, the land out there was a forest. You didn't see the shopping centers, you didn't see the fast food, you didn't see the service stations and the clothing stores that are there now. They took a chance on faith.

I remember when the board took that vote, it wasn't a simple majority. They had to have an 80 percent-plus in agreement of the board to locate there. If that is not democracy, I don't know what is.

The budget was \$490,000. It increased \$2,637,800.

They have had over 1,500 baptisms.

They sponsored the first African-American congregation for membership in the York Baptist Association in 1994.

They sponsored a second African-American congregation for member-

ship in the York Baptist Association in 2017.

Let me tell you about Pastor Hogg.

Pastor Hogg was born on January 14, 1958. He was born in Roxana, Kentucky. He was baptized and ordained in the First Baptist Church of Whitesburg, Kentucky. He has been pastor of the Bethel Baptist Church. He has been pastor of the Colson Baptist Mission. He has been the summer missionary at the First Baptist Church. And he has been the bus minister at the First Baptist Church in Kentucky.

Some of the honors and offices that he has devoted his time and talent to have been the South Carolina Baptist Convention, where he was president from 1993 to 1994. He was president of the Pastor's Conference. He was chairman of the United Christian Baccalaureate Planning Committee. He was on the Billy Graham Carolinas Crusade Executive Committee. He was a charter member of the city of Rock Hill No Room for Racism Committee.

Some of the new things he has started while at First Baptist Church in Rock Hill were the contemporary worship service, deaf ministry, women and men's ministries, television broadcasts of morning worship services, live streaming of worship services, Sunbeams Day School, and conducted eight capital fund campaigns.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but these 30 years are something to remember. It is something that ought to be a milestone for the church—and it is. If anybody has stood the test of time, it has been Steve Hogg and the First Baptist Church, and I commend the congregation. It is a great day for our State and it is a great day for America. God bless America.

CUBA AND BOLIVIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARR). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, a human rights activist in my native homeland of Cuba, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez, better known as Antunez, was detained in Cuba on his way to the airport. Antunez was going to speak at an event hosted by Freedom House and Justice Cuba, right here in D.C., to educate the public on the brutal realities of what continues to occur every day in Cuba.

But, instead, Raúl Castro sent his thugs to detain Antunez and prevent him from boarding the plane. The regime promised Antunez that he could travel if he only "tempered his activism."

Mr. Speaker, anyone who knows Antunez, who spent many a year in Castro's jails, knows that he will not abandon his principles, nor should he ever be forced to do so.

As Antunez always says, "Ni me callo, ni me voy," which means, "I won't stay silent and I won't leave." He is talking about his activism in Cuba.

Mr. Speaker, the Castro regime wants to paint a picture that people on the island are free, that human rights abuses do not exist in Cuba, but we know better. That is why there continues to be, every day, arbitrary arrests and beatings to stop dissidents and activists from speaking out—that is the menu every day—reminding the world that what these activists want is freedom. That is really what transpires in Castro's Cuba for dissidents.

Our message to those brave fighters for freedom in Cuba must be that we are listening to their plight, that we will stand with them in opposing Castro's evil rule, and that we have not forgotten about them or their continued fight for freedom and democracy.

So I urge this administration to continue to undo the damage done by the previous administration and their failed policy toward Cuba. I urge the administration to offer unequivocal support for the brave Cuban people, like Antunez. They deserve our unwavering support, and they deserve our solidarity so that the people of Cuba achieve what they have been seeking for decades, and it is simple, Mr. Speaker: freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, respect for the rule of law, free and open markets, and liberty from communism.

Mr. Speaker, in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, leftist dictators refuse to follow the rule of law, circumventing or ignoring completely their constitutions in order to maintain their hold in power. This practice has now spread to Bolivia, where strongman Evo Morales is taking a page from this playbook.

Less than 2 years ago, in 2016, Morales imposed a constitutional referendum to eliminate term limits for Presidents so that he could run for a third term.

But what happened in Bolivia?

The majority of the people said no. They went to the ballot box and they rejected this by a vote through a referendum.

What did Morales do?

He went to the court system that he has already rigged in his favor to seek the outcome that he desired. And, sure enough, his spineless cronies granted him his wish and approved his illegitimate run for a fourth term, agreeing that it was his human right—the only right, apparently, that is respected in Bolivia—to run for another term, ignoring completely the human rights of millions who voted to uphold their laws under their constitution.

The court's decision last week to lift constitutional limits on reelection should be disturbing to all of us and should serve as a wake-up call throughout the hemisphere. If we don't pay attention to Bolivia, it will soon become another Cuba or another Venezuela—failed states.

The decision to allow Morales to run for yet another term further erodes the democratic institutions in that country.

Sadly, this was not the first time that Morales or his thugs have chipped

away at Bolivia's democratic foundations in order to remain in power. In 2013, the constitutional court allowed him to run for a third term, stating that his first term didn't count—do-over, mulligan—because it occurred before the 2009 constitution took effect. What a farce.

This was obviously a cynical, political ploy, and should have served as the harbinger of worse things to come for Bolivia, and indeed it was, not to mention the ruling falls outside of the court's mandate to interpret and evaluate compliance with the constitution.

Responsible nations in our hemisphere, Mr. Speaker, must not remain silent, nor should this esteemed body. We must speak out in the support of the people of Bolivia to democratically elect their next leader.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Bolivian people before there is another crisis of democracy right in our hemisphere.

RETIREMENT OF DEAN OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago, in Detroit, the dean of the United States Congress offered his retirement immediately. He has asked me, a member of the Judiciary Committee, to offer his words to his colleagues and to put his statement in the RECORD that indicates that he has notified Speaker RYAN, Leader PELOSI, and Governor Snyder of his retirement from the United States House of Representatives.

It is important to note, as I begin, that there is no difference or no undermining of the rights of women and the abhorrence of sexual harassment and sexual assault. But this is a statement that I believe should be read on behalf of the dean of the United States Congress, Mr. JOHN CONYERS.

□ 1100

As a Member of Congress, I have known Mr. CONYERS to not shy away from a legislative challenge. In addition to being the first Member to introduce the Martin Luther King holiday bill, he was the first to hold hearings on police misconduct, the first to examine the problem of solitary confinement, the first to offer racial profiling legislation, the first to introduce legislation protecting against disenfranchisement of ex-felons, and the first to pursue legislation protecting Black farmers from discrimination, among many other civil rights measures.

In 2007, Representative CONYERS stood up for the prerogatives of the House of Representatives and successfully brought a suit against the former President Bush White House for failing to comply with subpoenas relating to a U.S. attorney's investigation.

He has been the chairman of the Judiciary Committee; and he will con-

tinue to, in his life, as he has indicated, stand for what is right.

It is now my privilege to read this statement from Mr. JOHN CONYERS. I reiterate that he says that he notified Speaker RYAN, Leader PELOSI, and Governor Snyder of his retirement from the United States House of Representatives.

It was his honor—these are his words—and his privilege to serve the constituents of Detroit, Michigan, as their United States Congressman in the 13th and 14th Congressional District for 53 years.

This is his statement again:

I came to Congress in 1964. Since then, I have devoted my entire career to improving the lives of my constituents in Detroit and on the behalf of justice everywhere. These years witnessed a profound evolution in civil rights, led by millions in the streets who marched for justice and people of conscience in the Congress—both Democrats and Republicans—who heard them and enacted the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and other landmark reforms. I have been in the forefront of the civil rights movement. I have been a champion of justice for the oppressed and the disenfranchised. I never wavered in my commitment to justice and democracy.

I am proud to have been part of that rich history. I have been privileged to be a founder of the Congressional Black Caucus and to represent the United States Congress by being dean.

I passed, as indicated, the law dealing with the Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Act, the Violence Against Women Act, the Hate Crimes Act, the USA Freedom Act, and the extension of the Voting Rights Act. I have led the fight against mandatory minimum sentences, hoping to reverse the devastating incarceration rates for African Americans and poor people. I have tried to pass a universal healthcare law, H.R. 676. Every Congress since 1989, I have introduced H.R. 40 to study reparations for slavery, and I deeply appreciate those handful of courageous colleagues who have joined me.

For Detroiters, I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish to bring hundreds of millions of dollars in critical grants and Federal funding for southeast Michigan to revitalize our great city, attract rich talent, and return to us prosperity.

I recognize that in this present environment, due process will not be afforded to me. I was taught by a great woman, my mother, to honor women. The first employee I ever hired was Mrs. Rosa Parks, who worked in my office for 22 years. It has been my great honor to work alongside some of the most talented and honorable staff on Capitol Hill and in Detroit.

I have stated my position on these allegations. I have worked with both women and men.

Given the totality of the circumstance of not being afforded the right of due process in conjunction with my current health condition, and to preserve my legacy and good name, I am retiring.

I hope that my retirement will be viewed in the larger perspective of my record of service, and as I enter a new chapter, I pledge to continue my commitment to a progressive vision and a better future for this country that I love. I owe that to the legacy of my father, John Conyers, Sr., who integrated labor unions in this country; to my brother Nathan, who integrated business, and he is my "main man;" and to my loving wife, Monica; and to my son, John III, who I

believe offers hope to this generation of leadership, and who is committed to being an advocate of fairness and justice for all; and to Carl Edward, who never leaves my side.

I cannot allow the great work of this body to be distracted from the important work, or the goals of the Democratic Party to be distracted. It has been an honor and a privilege of my life to represent the people of Michigan in the House of Representatives, but that responsibility will now fall to my colleagues and my successor. They have my deepest support and prayers. Jobs, justice, and peace.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 4 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Once again we come to ask wisdom, patience, peace, and understanding for the Members of this people's House.

Give them the generosity of heart and the courage of true leadership to work toward a common solution to the many issues facing our Nation.

As true statesmen and women, may they find the fortitude to make judgments that benefit all Americans in their time of need.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal. The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) come forward